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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **GOVERNOR O'MALLEY APPLAUDS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDER TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE UTILITIES' ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DEMAND RESPONSE PROGRAMS FOR 2012-2014**

*PSC order will ensure that Maryland moves closer to reducing its energy consumption by 15% by 2015*

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (December 23, 2011)** – Governor Martin O'Malley applauded today's announcement that the Public Service Commission has ordered a significant expansion and improvements to the utilities' energy efficiency and demand response programs for 2012-2014 as part of the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act of 2008.

The EmPOWER Maryland Act established a goal of reducing per capita electricity consumption and peak demand in the state 15% by 2015, as compared to a 2007 baseline. Maryland's five largest utilities are responsible for achieving 2/3 of the savings goal. Utilities currently administer energy efficiency and demand response programs for their customers. Programs were previously approved through the end of 2011.

"Today's decision demonstrates Maryland's ongoing commitment to energy efficiency," says Governor O'Malley. "The cheapest kilowatt is the one not needed. The EmPOWER Maryland goal is one of the most ambitious energy efficiency goals in the country, and our continued investment in safe, clean, and reliable energy will reduce our monthly bills, lessen our reliance on fossil fuels, and create thousands of jobs in the clean energy economy."

To date, utility programs have saved customers over 800,000 MWh in annual electricity savings, saving Marylanders more than \$100 million in annual energy costs. This avoids air pollution equivalent to taking approximately 100,000 cars off the road. More than 250,000 Maryland residents and businesses have participated in programs with their utilities, in addition to the 9.8 million energy efficient light bulbs rebated through partnerships with local retailers. The improvements announced today will continue the momentum that has built within these programs over the past three years and will help hundreds of thousands of Marylanders save energy and money on their utility bills. Maryland was recognized earlier this year as a "top ten" state for energy efficiency by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

Key improvements to the programs approved for 2012-2014 include:

- Increased rebates for energy efficient equipment for residences and businesses,
- Increase in rebate amounts from 15% to 50% of the cost of residential energy makeovers through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, and
- Statewide administration of limited income energy efficiency programs by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

In addition, utilities are ordered to make their energy efficiency programs consistent statewide, which will reduce confusion for homeowners and businesses and allow retailers and contractors to operate more efficiently across the state.

Malcolm Woolf, director of the Maryland Energy Administration, says, "Programs funded by EmPOWER Maryland over the past three years have reduced prices and helped keep the lights on during last year's summer heat wave. The order issued today provides significant improvement to energy efficiency programs statewide. We applaud the efforts of the utilities and the PSC in meeting the ambitious EmPOWER Maryland goals and we encourage all Marylanders to contact their utility today to make their home or business more energy efficient."

For more information about energy efficiency in Maryland, visit [www.energy.md.gov](http://www.energy.md.gov) or contact a local utility:

Potomac Edison: <http://www.alleghenypower.com/>

Baltimore Gas and Electric: [www.bgesmartenergy.com](http://www.bgesmartenergy.com)

Delmarva Power: [www.delmarva.com](http://www.delmarva.com)

Pepco: [www.pepco.com](http://www.pepco.com)

SMECO: <https://www.smeco.coop/>

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The Maryland Energy Administration's (MEA) mission is to assist Maryland citizens and businesses to save money through smart investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy and conservation. A Maryland state agency, MEA fuels the creation of green jobs by providing funds and resources to expand the use and availability of clean, safe energy in Maryland.